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# HINTS

ON

# HOME MISSIONS

FOR

## PRESBYTERIAN YOUNG PEOPLE

Published by

THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S DEPARTMENT

Of the Board of Home Missions and the Woman's Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church

156 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY, N. Y

# JUST A FEW HINTS

A CLEVER Secretary in her annual report gave a text: "If you have frequent and severe cases of indifference in your society, try prescribing large doses of information." "It is well," replied the leader and the Missionary Committee, "but where, oh, where shall the medicine be found?" An outline of the necessary ingredients is all that is now offered. Mix these with a heartful of earnestness, a plentiful supply of hard work, a large pinch of common sense and tact, and season thoroughly with a consecrated desire to advance the Kingdom of the Lord on earth and there cannot be failure.

**PRESBYTERIAN GOVERNMENT.**

The government of the Presbyterian Church is similar to our national system of government. How nearly it corresponds may be readily seen. We have churches, presbyteries, synods, and, over all, General Assembly.

(a.) **Churches. A Church** consists of a number of professing Christians with their children voluntarily associated together for Divine worship, and submitting to a certain form of government.

For mutual counsel and assistance, and in order to enter into common measures for promoting knowledge and religion, and to preserve regularity of government, churches are banded together in Presbyteries.

(b.) **Presbyteries. A Presbytery** consists of all the ministers (in number not less than five) and one ruling elder from each congregation within a certain district. The form of the word shows its vital connection with the Presbyterian Church. The Presbytery originates overtures to

the Synods and the General Assembly; is the court to which are referred all questions from the local churches; licenses and ordains ministers; ratifies and dissolves relations between churches and pastors. All ministers must retain their connection with some Presbytery while they remain in the Presbyterian Church as ministers.

(c.) **Synods.** As Presbytery is a convention of ministers and elders within a certain district, so Synod is a convention of the ministers and elders within a larger district, including at least three Presbyteries. Thus the Synods occupy a position between the Presbyteries and the General Assembly; meeting annually for conference, Synod exercises the same control over Presbyteries that Presbyteries hold over individual ministers and churches.

(d.) **General Assembly.** The General Assembly is the highest court of the Presbyterian Church and represents in one body all the particular churches of our denomination. This body is composed of an equal number of ministers and elders delegated annually from each Presbytery, and meets in a place chosen by the preceding Assembly. General Assembly receives overtures from the various Presbyteries as to forms of government, changes or new movements, and decides questions referred to it by the lower church courts.

Thus we see a group of churches within a limited area comprises a Presbytery; a larger group of churches or a number of presbyteries comprise a Synod; while the entire body of the Church, by commissioners appointed directly by the various Presbyteries, is represented in the General Assembly.

## PRESBYTERIAN GEOGRAPHY.

We have noted that General Assembly has a name but no definite "local habitation," each one of the twenty-nine Synods has, however, fixed boundaries, which in most cases—note, however, **not in all**—correspond to the State boundaries; for example, the Synod of Illinois includes only the Presbyterian Churches within the boundaries of that State. New York Synod, however, includes all the Presbyterian churches of New England, in addition to those of New York State. As every Presbytery must be connected with some Synod, we find New Jersey having eight within the bounds of the State, and one, Corisco, on the west coast of Africa. These are but examples.

The division into Presbyteries is purely arbitrary, being ordinarily governed by accessibility. Thus a church may sometimes be transferred from one Presbytery to another, as new lines of railroad are built. Each church belongs to one of the 214 Presbyteries and to one of the twenty-nine Synods. With which are you connected?

## BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS.

As early as 1707 the Presbytery of Philadelphia, the first to organize, voted "That every minister of Presbytery supply neighboring desolate places where a minister is wanting and opportunity for doing good is offered." The first General Assembly convened in 1789 and it was then overtured "that the state of the frontier settlements should be taken into consideration, and missionaries be sent to them, to form them into congregations, . . . and direct them to the best measures for obtaining the gospel ministry regularly among them." In 1802 Assembly ap-

pointed a **Standing Committee of Missions**, and in 1816 organized and empowered the **Board of Home Missions** to transact all business naturally pertaining to such a department.

This Board, consisting of twenty-one members, of whom not more than eleven shall be ministers of the gospel, is responsible to the Assembly alone, its members being appointed by that body. The members of the Board meet monthly for conference. They elect annually a secretary and a treasurer, who, with their assistants, form the executive force at the Home Mission headquarters, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

The Board of Home Missions, upon the advice and in connection with the Presbyteries, aids such congregations as are unable fully to support the stated preaching of the gospel, and endeavors to distribute ministers and means according to the relative importance and promise of different fields, the purpose being to establish churches that may in time become self-sustaining, and thus strengthen the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

At the close of the fiscal year 1897–98 there were 1,393 missionaries under commission, these being located in thirty-nine States and Territories, twenty-four of which lie west of the Mississippi River.

## WOMAN'S BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS.

At the time of the opening of Utah and the Southwest by railways, the missionaries sent by the Board to those regions called for schools to prepare the way before them. It was evident that the Indians, the Spanish-speaking people of Colorado and New Mexico, and the Mormons of Utah and Idaho must be reached through their

children. These facts were presented to the Assemblies of 1872, '73, '74 by the Board, while the Presbyteries of Utah and Colorado, as well as the women of Iowa, also overtured General Assembly along these same lines. The Assembly of 1875 first took action, recommending that "a Woman's Home Missionary Society, with auxiliary societies, under the advice and counsel of the Board of Home Missions, or its officers," be organized, but it was not until May, 1878, that a convention of interested women was called and a committee of twelve, representing various parts of the country, was appointed. This Committee issued a call and on December 12th, 1878, representatives from the Synodical Committees met in New York and organized the Woman's Executive Committee.

The special duties assumed were to raise money for the support of mission schools and teachers for the children of the exceptional peoples above mentioned, to diffuse information regarding Home Mission work, and to increase interest in the cause. In 1886 Assembly enlarged the sphere of the work by authorizing the establishment of mission schools among the mountain people of the South, the Assembly of 1895 "recommended work among the people of the foreign tongues in the great cities and the mining regions of Pennsylvania and the West, while the Assembly of 1897 recommended the support of Bible readers and native evangelists, especially in those sections where the demand had been created by the mission schools.

In June, 1897, the name of the Woman's Executive Committee was changed to the Woman's Board of Home Missions.

At the close of the year 1898–99, there were 121

schools with 347 mission workers under commission from the Woman's Board, being located as follows: Among the Alaskans 11 schools and 33 teachers; Indians, 18 schools and 89 teachers; Mexicans, 24 schools and 50 teachers; Mormons, 29 schools and 64 teachers; Mountains of the South, 36 schools and 105 teachers; Foreigners, 3 schools and 6 teachers.

The Woman's Board is composed of various committees for the transaction of the necessary business, and an executive force of a secretary and a treasurer with their assistants, at 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

**SOCIETIES—Synodical and Presbyterial.**

The women's local Home Missionary societies and bands auxiliary to the Woman's Board of Home Missions are for the furtherance of the work organized into Presbyterial societies. At the meetings reports of the work are presented, new methods for arousing interest are discussed, and plans for organizing new societies in churches are made. Along the lines of pure Presbyterian forms there is also a Synodical society which likewise holds an annual meeting, at which the work of the various Presbyteries is reported, where weak and disheartened sections are strengthened and encouraged, and where are adopted the plans of work sent down by the Woman's Board of Home Missions. Specific work is usually assigned each Synod, and such is sent by the Woman's Board to the Synodical officers; after adoption at the annual Synodical meeting, word is sent to the Presbyterial officers. The matter is presented at the annual Presbyterial meeting, and after ratification there, is sent by the Presbyterial officers to the local societies.

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S DEPARTMENT.

As an adjunct to the Board of Home Missions and the Woman's Board, vitally connected with both of them, stands the Young People's Department, which has for its especial care the enlistment of the young people's societies of the Church in Home Mission work; the assignment of synodical objects to these societies, and the gathering and disseminating of information concerning the mission fields. The secretary of this department, being chosen both by the Board and by the Woman's Board, presents impartially the work of both, although the work is pushed through the channel of the women's Synodical and Presbyterial organizations.

In 1896 General Assembly gave primarily to the women of the Church the care and supervision of the Home Mission work done by the young people of the Church, urging upon them a careful education of the various young people's societies. In accordance with these instructions the women's Synodical and Presbyterial societies, with but few exceptions, elected in both organizations secretaries of young people's work whose especial care it should be to enlist the sympathy and cooperation of the young people. The Synodical secretary of young people's work receives from the Young People's Department at New York suggestive plans for work; she passes these on to the Presbyterial secretaries of young people's work, who in turn communicate them to the local societies. Thus in the Young People's Department, as in all others, is the Presbyterian form of work continued, and the best results are secured in those districts where persistent, intelligent and methodical efforts have been made by

Synodical, Presbyterial and local officers along these lines.

The Synodical and Presbyterial young people's secretaries, although elected by the women's organizations, present impartially the work of both Boards.

## SYNODICAL OBJECTS.

That there may be a unity of interest among the young people of each Synod, special home missionaries are assigned for their support, two being given to each Synod, one a missionary of the Board, the other a missionary teacher of the Woman's Board. The societies are asked to send their offerings for either one they may desire or to divide the amount between the two. All details relative to the missionaries assigned, the three yearly letters concerning their work and the means by which these letters may be secured, are in the hands of the Presbyterial secretaries of young people's work. Would you know? Write *your* Presbyterial secretary.

## WHY WORK THROUGH THE BOARDS?

Because they are the authorized agents of the Church for caring for the Home Mission work done by the Church; because it is only by having a central office to which can be sent the needs of the fields and the resources of the Church to meet these needs that the work can be done systematically, thoroughly and efficiently; because if each local church should send its own offerings to a field asking for aid it would soon come about that one field would be over supplied and many others left entirely destitute; because few local churches or societies could have the opportunities to make a careful study of the general field,

or even of any particular one; because experience has proven that this is the most economical, the most satisfactory, the best way of doing the work of our Church.

**HOME MISSION NEEDS.**

There is a part for each Presbyterian young man or woman to bear in the work of evangelizing our land—the call to follow the Master should be to each one a very definite call to service. Should a hostile nation attack the United States each patriot, either man or woman, would soon be found serving, giving, praying; anxious hearts would direct to loving labors, and with one unbroken front all would stand against the common enemy.

The ranks of sin and evil are united against the Kingdom of our Lord to which as Christians each owes allegiance. Should not all rally to the army of the heavenly kingdom with even more loyalty than to that of an earthly?

The generation of those who now fill the young people's societies has a mighty work before it; there are hundreds of thousands of unchristianized peoples in our land, there are continually coming multitudes of others; there are vast country regions left without churches or pastors where even a burial service can not find a minister of the gospel, where Sunday is like unto any week day as to the method of observance, where boys and girls are growing to manhood and womanhood having never heard of Christ and His love. There are in the cities the great hordes of people to whom no gospel is preached, who, as "myriads of maddened horses," rush through life uncared for and uncaring—it is to the service of all of these that your Church calls you.

## HOME MISSION OFFERINGS.

The call to service heeded, will mean giving "as God hath prospered." First and foremost come the claims of one's own denomination and each loyal Presbyterian will lend an ear to those claims. Thus and thus only can the Church do the work which is before her.

As to the business arrangements for the sending of such funds, see the Treasury Diagram on last page.

## HOME MISSION LITERATURE.

No one is willing to invest even a small amount in a worldly matter about which little or nothing is known, and duty demands that much more care should be exercised in placing the money with which "God hath prospered" where it may do the most good. In order to give intelligently to the objects assigned to their societies, young people must have information regarding the conditions on the field. The oft-repeated cry, "diminished contributions," is a sure proof that there has been a lack of information. "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out." Proverbs 26 : 20.

That Presbyterians may know of the work conducted by the Home Board and the Woman's Board, a Literature Department has been established. Its catalogue, furnished free of charge, shows lists of good leaflets describing the various fields, and others which furnish instructions for conducting missionary meetings. This department is ready to serve all who may desire Home Mission information. Address Literature Department, Room 720, 156 Fifth Ave., New York City.

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# TREASURY DIAGRAM

## Board of Home Missions

SUPPORTS

**MISSIONARIES EVANGELISTS** } Among Americans and the people of the exceptional population, including representatives of thirty foreign nations within the borders of the United States,

**BY CONTRIBUTIONS**

From Churches, Sabbath schools, Christian Endeavorers, Junior Christian Endeavorers and Individuals.

## Woman's Board of Home Missions

SUPPORTS

**MISSIONARY TEACHERS** } Among Alaskans, Mexicans, Mormons, Indians and Mountaineers,

**BY CONTRIBUTIONS**

From Women's Societies, Sabbath schools, Christian Endeavorers, Junior Christian Endeavorers, Bands and Individuals.

It is advised that all moneys contributed by the C. E. and Junior Societies be forwarded by the local treasurers to the Treasurer of the Woman's Presbyterial Society of Home Missions, and that she send money as designated, that intended for the Board of Home Missions to Mr. Harvey C. Olin, Treasurer, and that intended for the Woman's Board of Home Missions to Miss S. F. Lincoln, Treasurer, since this will decrease expense and labor at headquarters.